

# Biblical Fundamentalism vs. Neo-Evangelicalism

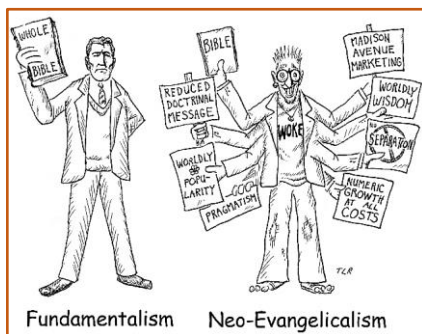
## *A Historical & Theological Analysis*

### I. The Historical Context behind the present dispute...

- **The rise of modernism**; a major battle in the early 1900's; fundamentalists vs. liberals in all major denominations; disputes over the Nature of God, the Deity & Virgin Birth of Christ, Biblical Authority & Inerrancy, salvation, etc.
- **Liberals capture the major denominations**, resulting in major denominational schisms. Conservatives separate from the liberals and operate within their own structures, creating new denominations & seminaries—and are often branded by critics as sectarians who are disconnected from the culture.
- **Post-WWII: the rise of Neo-evangelicalism**: Billy Graham, *Christianity Today*, & Fuller Theological Seminary become flagship ministries for the “*new evangelicals*.” These “new men” were basically orthodox in their central doctrines, but sought a new pragmatic approach and a new methodology with the aim of reaching the prevailing secular culture...
- **Neo-Evangelicals denounced the older fundamentalists** as being divisive, separatistic, disengaged from the culture, anti-intellectual, & culturally isolated (“*fumbling fundamentalists*”).
- **Fundamentalism’s response to Neo-evangelicalism**: The “new evangelicalism” is *doctrinally shallow*, dismissive of *separation*, overly *pragmatic*, and *spiritually compromised*; it is too “Madison Avenue,” and is preoccupied with gaining *worldly applause* (John 15:18-19; 17:14). Further, it is prideful in its unbounded desire for *academic acceptance* by infidel-elites.

### **A Summary Critique of Neo-Evangelicalism**

1. Neo-evangelical churches are often characterized by a certain **shallowness**, without adequate attention to the value of **doctrine or truth**. Often people are not choosing churches based upon *truth-considerations*, but upon purported “lifestyle-enhancement” (e.g., programs, entertainment, “flash,” etc.).



2. The above speaks to a **SELF-centeredness**, as opposed to a **GOD-centered focus**; i.e., “*What can the local church do for ME and MY felt-needs?*”—as opposed to: “*What can I do for GOD? How can I best glorify HIM and preserve HIS Truth?*”
3. It is rooted in **pragmatic compromise**. The Message is thus modified, streamlined, compromised, and over-simplified (*despite* Matt. 28:20, Acts 20:27). Ends-justify-the-means style **expediency** is valued, as are “Madison Avenue” approaches. **Numeric growth** is *everything*—**obedience to God** is *nothing*!
4. So-called “**non-essential**” **doctrines are de-emphasized** (e.g., creation, eschatology, church ordinances)—which has **now** led to the de-emphasis of **MAJOR** doctrines (e.g., God’s attributes & perfections, Biblical inerrancy, Eternal Punishment, etc.)!
5. A decline in **moral/lifestyle standards**—more “easy-going.”
6. **Biblical Separation** (2 Cor. 6:14-18) is **NOT** emphasized nor maintained! Neo-evangelicals often **ecclesiastically unite** for pragmatic purposes with liberals & Catholics (e.g., Billy Graham).
7. It is overly preoccupied with **humanistic strategies** (*contra* Ezek. 2:3-7), *business* models, *marketing* strategies, and the latest *fads*—as opposed to *resting in the power of God*...
8. It is overly preoccupied with receiving the **applause of the empowered academic infidel elites**—a key issue involved with the undermining of once-conservative seminaries (Jms.4:4).
9. **Extrabiblical authority** (e.g., the latest “science” or popular “wisdom”) is often favored over the Scriptures...
10. “**Woke!**” In accordance with its desire to reach the elites and curry favor with the crowds, it has, in recent years, tended to demonstrate its “enlightenment” through an increased association with political & economic **utopian-progressivism**.
11. It is **overly preoccupied with love & unity** (John 17:21)—at the **expense of TRUTH** (John 17:17). **1 Cor. 13:6**: “[Love] *does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth...*”

**The results:** a **downgrade**—a postmodern Church whose deficiencies and immaturities have led to doctrinal & lifestyle accommodation with the world. Neo-evangelicalism is “*neither cold nor hot*” (Rev.3:15)—and it has not even achieved the promised and anticipated results in terms of growth and outreach: *the culture continues to putrefy!*